



StrongSchoolsNC

What Are We Learning About Children and COVID-19?

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*We know that our children learn best when they have the opportunity to be together with their classmates and teachers. We are learning more every day regarding COVID-19 in children and teens, including the role they may play in spreading COVID-19. We are using the latest research to make decisions about how we should operate our schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to follow new data and science as it is available to learn more. It is important to understand that current studies and data summarized below still present an early and limited picture of what we know about children and school reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Be sure to check back for regular updates by visiting <https://www.nc.gov/covid19>.***

Children are less likely to have COVID-19, spread COVID-19, or have severe illness with COVID-19 than adults

- Children, particularly younger children, are less likely than adults to have COVID-19.
- Children are less likely to become infected than adults, even after being exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- If infected, children may be less likely to spread COVID-19 to others, even in school or group settings.
- Younger, elementary-aged children appear less likely to spread COVID-19 than older children and adolescents.
- Children are more likely to get COVID-19 from an adult than to spread COVID-19 to an adult.
- Children infected with COVID-19 generally have mild or no symptoms.

COVID-19 appears to behave differently in young children and teens in schools than other common respiratory viruses, like the flu

- Although young children and teens play a major role in flu outbreaks, this does not appear to be the case with COVID-19.
- While there have been some specific examples, so far schools have not seemed to play a major role in the spread of COVID-19.
- Studies from other countries suggest school closures did not contribute to the spread of the epidemic.
- Closing schools may have little effect on reducing deaths due to COVID-19.

Less than 6 feet of social distancing may still be protective for children

- The CDC still recommends 6 feet of social distancing as the most health protective distancing.
- However, in low and medium risk settings, 3 feet of social distancing may lead to a similar risk for the spread of COVID-19, especially when people wear cloth face coverings. Because of decreased risk of spread among children, schools may be considered low or medium risk.
- Keeping students (or children) spread out with more space in between them provides additional protection.

Learn More

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[CDC, Reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and estimated cumulative incidence, by sex and age group — United States; January 22–May 30, 2020](#)

[CDC, MMWR: Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report, Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Children — United States; February 12–April 2, 2020.](#)

[Preprint. MedRxiv, Susceptibility to and transmission of COVID-19 amongst children and adolescents compared with adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis; May 24, 2020](#)

[Cluster of COVID-19 in northern France: A retrospective closed cohort study. April 23, 2020](#)

[SARS-CoV-2 infections in primary schools in northern France: A retrospective cohort study in an area of high transmission.](#)

[School Opening across globe suggest ways to keep coronavirus at bay, despite outbreaks. July 7, 2020](#)

[Prevent Epidemics, COVID-19 Weekly Science Review; June 20-26, 2020](#)

[Nature, Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in children and/or adolescents: a meta-analysis; June 17, 2020](#)

[CDC, COVID 19 Information for Pediatric Health Care Providers; May 29, 2020](#)

[DA International, Hospital Admission in Children and Adolescents With COVID-19, Early results from a national survey conducted by the German Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases; May 5, 2020](#)

[BMJ Global Health, Reduction of secondary transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in households by face mask use, disinfection and social distancing: a cohort study in Beijing, China; May 11, 2020](#)

[Science, Changes in contact patterns shape the dynamics of the COVID-19 outbreak in China; June 26, 2020](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry; June 25, 2020](#)

[World Health Organization, Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19; May 10, 2020](#)

COVID-19 appears to behave differently in young children and teens in schools than other common respiratory viruses, like the flu.

[Cluster of COVID-19 in northern France: A retrospective closed cohort study. April 23, 2020](#)

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[School Opening across globe suggest ways to keep coronavirus at bay, despite outbreaks. July 7, 2020](#)

[Prevent Epidemics, COVID-19 Weekly Science Review; June 20-26, 2020](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry; June 25, 2020](#)

[Learning Policy Institute, Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines from other Countries](#)

[Center for Global Development, Back to School: An update on COVID cases as schools reopen; June 12, 2020](#)

[NCIRS, COVID-19 in schools- the experience in NSW; April 26, 2020](#)

[Lancet Child and Adolescent Health, School Closure and Management Practices During Coronavirus Outbreaks Including COVID-19: A Rapid Systematic Review; April 6, 2020](#)

Less than 6 feet of social distancing may still be protective for children

[The Lancet, Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis; June 1, 2020](#)

[World Health Organization, Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19; May 10, 2020](#)